Vedanta

The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York bases its teachings on the system of Vedanta, especially as explained by Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) and his disciple Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) and demonstrated in their lives. Vedanta is the philosophy that has evolved from the teachings of the Vedas, which are a collection of ancient Indian scriptures -- the world's oldest religious writings.

According to the Vedas, ultimate reality is all-pervading, uncreated, self-luminous, eternal spirit, the final cause of the universe, the power behind all tangible forces, the consciousness which animates all conscious beings. This is the central philosophy of the Vedantist, and his or her religion consists of meditation on this spirit and prayer for guidance along the path of virtue and righteousness.

From the philosophical standpoint, Vedanta is non-dualistic, and from the religious standpoint, monotheistic. The Vedanta philosophy asserts the essential non-duality of God, soul, and universe, the apparent distinctions being created by names and forms which, from the standpoint of ultimate reality, do not exist. Vedanta accepts all religions as true and regards the various Godheads of different faiths as diverse manifestations of the one Absolute.

According to Vedanta, religion is experience and not mere acceptance of certain time-honored dogmas or creeds. To know God is to become like God. We may quote scriptures, engage in rituals, perform social service, or pray with regularity, but unless we realize the divine spirit in our hearts, we are still phenomenal beings, victims of the separative existence. One can experience God as tangibly as “a fruit lying on the palm of one's hand,” which means that in this very life we can overcome our lower nature, manifest our higher nature, and become perfect. Through the experience of God, one's doubts disappear and the “knots of the heart are cut asunder.” By ridding oneself of all desires, a mortal becomes immortal in this very body. That the attainment of immortality is not the prerogative of a chosen few, but the birthright of all, is the conviction of every follower of Vedanta.

Vedanta asserts that Truth is universal and that humankind and all of existence are one. It teaches the unity of the Godhead, or ultimate Reality, and accepts every faith as a valid means for its own followers to realize the Truth. The four cardinal principles of Vedanta may be summed up as follows: the non-duality of the Godhead, the divinity of the soul, the unity of existence, and the harmony of religions. The faith of the Vedantist is based on these four principles.

The essential teaching of Vedanta, as stated by Swami Vivekananda, is: "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature: external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy -- by one, or more, or all of these -- and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details."

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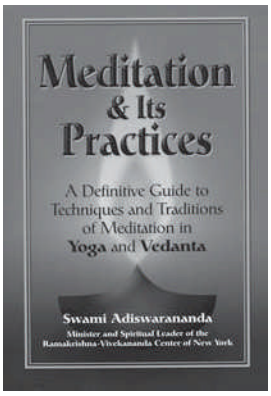

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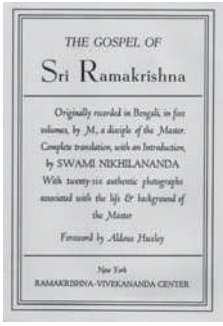
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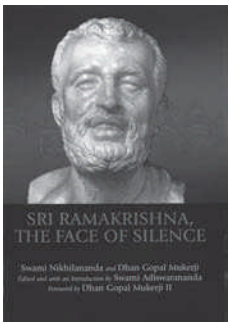

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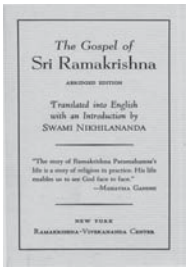

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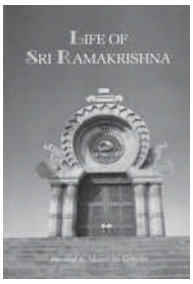

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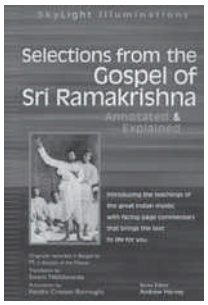

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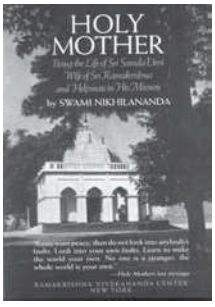

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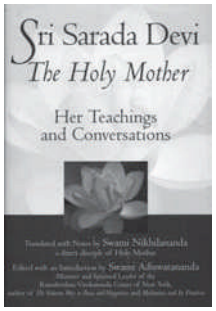

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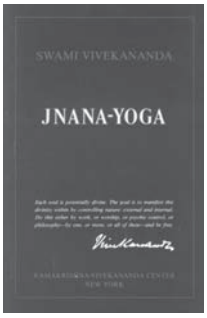

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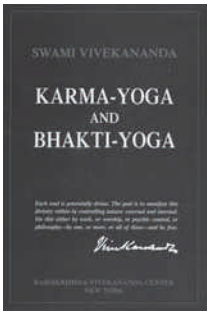

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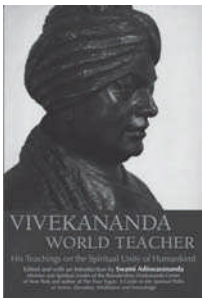

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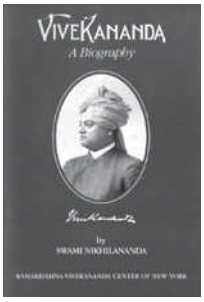

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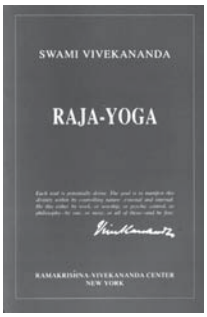

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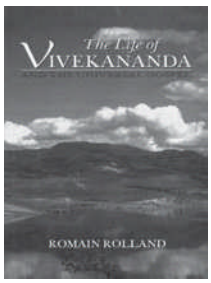

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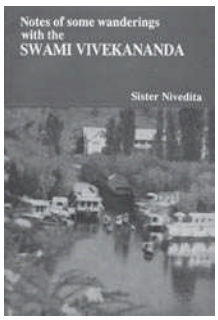

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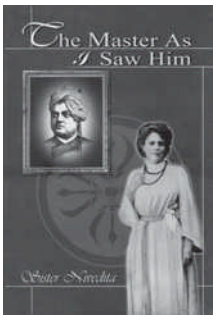

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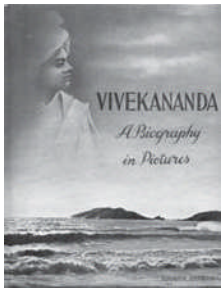

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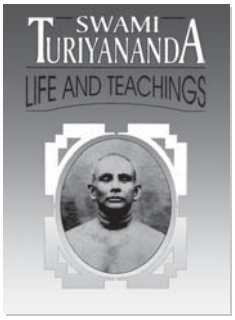

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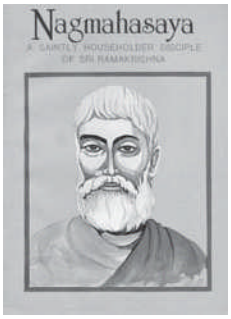

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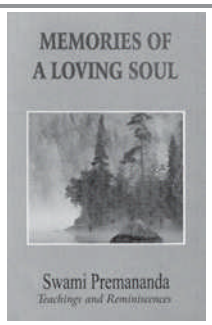

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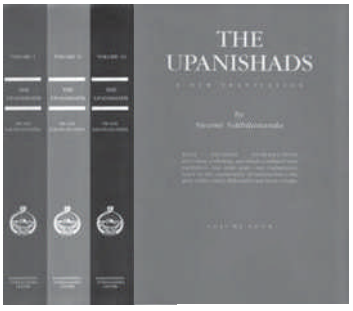

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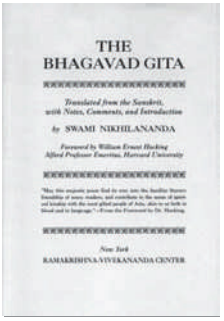

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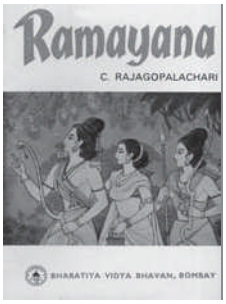

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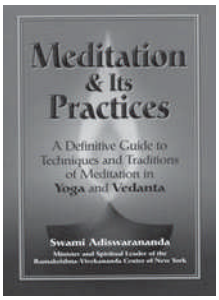

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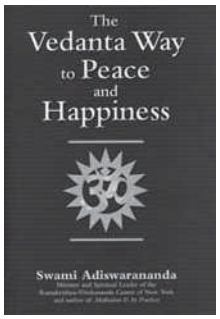

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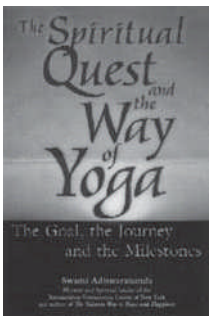

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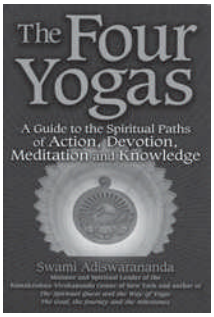

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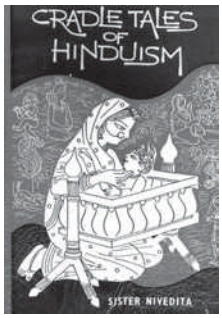

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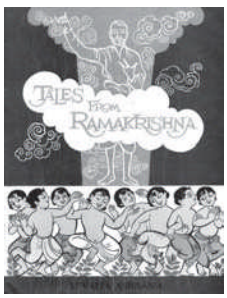

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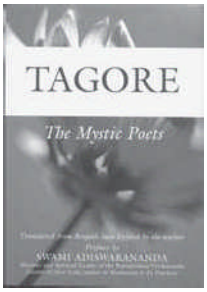

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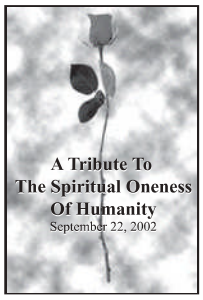

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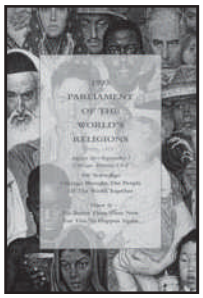

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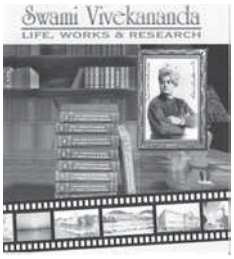

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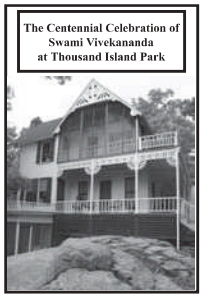

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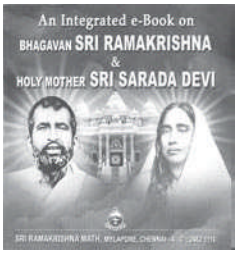

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* UPS Shipping and Handling. No P.O. Boxes permitted.
Books, Photographs and incense are each packaged separately. Please include the following postage and handling charges for each package.

Order Total	Domestic	Canada	International
$0 - $15.00	*$6.00*	*$14.00*	*$31.00*
$15.01 - $30.00	*$7.00*	*$17.00*	*$37.00*
$30.01 - $50.00	*$8.00*	*$20.00*	*$43.00*
$50.01 - $75.00	*$9.00*	*$24.00*	*$49.00*
$75.01 - $100.00	*$10.00*	*$35.00*	*$55.00*
$100.01 - up	*$11.00*	*$46.00*	*$61.00*